



RMC Health Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Sara Seitz, Kat Rodgers, Nicole Flaherty, Melissa Kelly, Daniel Schneckenburger, Carmella Davis Watkins, Linda Kohler, David Stewart, Judith Walker, Jackie Ward, Renee Dejewski, Teresa Zent, Charlotte Davis, Molli Cole, Amanda Clevenger, Megan D'Arcy

Committee Chair Sara Seitz welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 10:03 am. Chair Seitz asked for approval of the February 22, 2023 meeting minutes. Daniel Schneckenburger moved the motion to approve the 2/22/2023 meeting minutes, and Nicole Flaherty seconded the motion. The 2/22/2023 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair Seitz shared a draft of the mission and vision for the Committee discussed at the February meeting. The mission and values as presented were the following:

The RMC Health Committee aims to support:

Mission

- Connection of partners to build awareness of health needs in rural Maryland.
- Development of a robust healthcare workforce across the state;
- Rural populations' access to health care through innovative and appropriate models of care;
- Understanding of the interconnectedness of rural Maryland's health with all aspects of Maryland living.

Values

- Diversity, inclusion, and equity
- A focus on the social drivers of health as a foundation for good health
- Innovation
- Being an informed voice in support of rural Maryland's health

Comments included simplifying the statement by merging the first and fourth bullet points as they both include connection, and it was recommended to only include 'Advocacy of health needs in Rural Maryland' in the first bullet point as it is more action oriented. Replacing understanding with 'Ensuring' in the fourth bullet. The second bullet is to focus on 'serving rural Maryland'. Comments on the Values suggested that they should all be written the same way (e.g., one word or several). It was decided to have these brought back to the group once they are finalized and in print. The Committee can then vote and make a recommendation to the RMC Executive Board for approval.

- ~~Connection of partners to build awareness~~ and Advocacy of health needs in rural Maryland;
- Development of a robust healthcare workforce ~~across the state~~ serving rural Maryland;

- Rural populations' access to health care through innovative and appropriate models of care;
- **Understanding** Ensuring the interconnectedness of rural Maryland's health with all aspects of Maryland living.

The Committee discussed work force and Chair Seitz reported on the following:

- The Maryland State Office of Rural Health (SORH) completed a survey and analysis of community health workers across the State and in rural Maryland specifically. Chair Seitz shared the following link. [MD-CHW-and-CHW-Employer-Surveys-Analysis-and-Report-2022.pdf \(maryland.gov\)](#).
- SORH will be recruiting for a Workforce Coordinator.
- The Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis continues to meet and is building recommendations for the legislature for improving the workforce and shortages in underserved areas. Chair Seitz shared the following link and invited Committee members to participate in the meetings. [Pages - Workforce Commission \(maryland.gov\)](#)

The Committee members shared thoughts on workforce, and these included that in addition to nursing, GNAs and CNAs are critical workforce need. The Committee talked about the need for training opportunities. The Committee discussed that there are ample training providers in the State but there are not enough applicants. Chair Seitz shared that the Department of Labor through legislation is implementing a career pathway for health care workers that will provide grants to employers to not just pay for training but also for supportive materials.

Chair Seitz shared success from the 2023 Legislative Session and stated that there is a quarterly Maryland Statewide Telehealth Interest group call that brings together a wide variety of folks and new participants are welcome. She stated that the next meeting is July 14, 2023, and shared the following link: <https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/Rural-health.aspx>. Chair Seitz provided an update on the Chapter 382 Telehealth Access Act of 2023 that extends audio only in Maryland and payment parity for in-person and telehealth until 2025. Charlottee Davis provided information and background on the Maryland Telehealth Alliance. Ms. Davis stated that there have been transitions in leadership at the Alliance and RMC has taken ownership of the leadership structure. The Committee discussed whether the structure should be kept intact.

The Committee discussed Chapter 331 of the Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023. Charlotte Davis thanked everyone for participating in the roundtables, the report, and the bill signing. The Committee discussed how they build legislation for next year, particularly focusing on the Rural Health Transportation Pilot Program, advocating for resources and additional capacity, and reestablishment and repopulating (including legislators) the Coordinating Committee.

Chair Seitz reported on the Rural Health Plan, stating that SORH is a fiscal sponsor of the Plan and MHRA is the vendor focusing on the plan as well as their sub-vendor Luminis. Chair Seitz stated that the MHRA held four regional meetings to discuss the Plan focusing on development in 2023 and both transportation and workforce were big topics. The Plan will be released this summer/early fall.

Chair Seitz stated that the next meeting for the group is August 23, 2023, and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melissa Kelly made the motion to adjourn, and Noell Flaherty seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:58 am.